



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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CONCESSION WILL BE REBUILT AT VIKING LAKE

DES MOINES – The beach and concession building at Viking Lake State Park will be rebuilt in 2007 after a fire destroyed the four year old building on July 18. The Executive Council for Iowa State Government, headed by Governor-elect Chet Culver, approved an \$800,000 request from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources on Monday to rebuild and to furnish the building.

“We are very excited about this because by getting approval to replace the building now, it will allow us to go through the process of selecting a contractor in time to start construction as soon as the weather allows,” said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of state parks for the Iowa DNR. “We will basically use the same plans as we did in 2002.”

The building housed a restaurant, the restrooms for the beach and the park store.

“This is a very popular building in a very popular state park,” Szcodronski said. “We are going to get it back in operation just the way it was on the day before the fire.”

For more information, contact Szcodronski at 515-281-8674.

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DNR TO FEATURE VIDEOS ONLINE

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has added videos to its website, www.iowadnr.gov. Videos online include interviews with members of the Civil Conservation Corps who helped build many Iowa state parks, a video on raising

catfish at the Rathbun Fish Hatchery and a video on ice fishing on the Upper Mississippi River.

“We will offer new videos regularly that showcase natural areas and outdoor activities in our state,” said Kevin Baskins, chief of the communications bureau at the Iowa DNR.

The videos require Windows Media Player for viewing. There is a link to download the player for free, if needed. Click on “DNR Online Videos” under the “Additional Information” heading in the navigation column on the left side of the webpage. Then select either the broadband or dial up connection.

“Our hope is people will find these videos entertaining and informative, and may inspire them to try something new outdoors,” Baskins said.

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IOWA’S CHEERLEADER: BILL RILEY

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

CLEAR LAKE---By now everyone has heard and been saddened by the news. Bill Riley is dead at 86.

Perhaps no face has been more familiar to more Iowans over a longer period of time than has that of Bill Riley. Although the pioneer radio and television broadcaster was involved in a wide variety of high-profile public activities, fans will best remember him as the voice and face of the Iowa State Fair. For more than 60 years, the Riley Talent Stage has entertained countless thousands of Iowans and remains a focal point for State Fair excitement.

Throughout his life, Bill Riley maintained a deep appreciation for Iowa’s rich natural beauty and diverse live forms. Although widely traveled and intimately acquainted with many of the state’s scenic treasures, his best loved natural area seems strangely out of character for such an energetic and outgoing personality. When it came time to seek the quiet solitude of nature, Riley’s all time favorite place was Rock Run — a tiny, scarcely noticed tributary of the Iowa River.

During a 2003 visit at his Clear Lake home, Riley described some of his early adventures at Rock Run.

“Rock Run is a very small stream, barely more than a trickle, that runs through Iowa Falls and flows into the Iowa River,” said Riley.

“When I was a youngster, I went there often with my little dog Jerry. We would wander the length of Rock Run. I’ve always been intrigued with birds and animals, and everything I saw there fascinated me.

“I remember the damp aroma that lingered along the stream. Limestone cliffs ran along the side, and there were great clouds of pigeons roosting and nesting there. I’d climb up and try to catch the birds in their holes, and sometimes I did. [Riley would keep some of the pigeons he caught as pets, and then later return them to the wild.]

“When I graduated from the eighth grade, the Iowa Falls Rotary held a luncheon to honor us. I was one of the two top students in that class. But when the time came to go, I just disappeared. I think I was nervous about the crowd and just needed to get away. It didn’t matter though — Mom knew exactly where I’d be. She sent my brother, and he found me and the dog wandering along Rock Run. He made some stern threats and I went to the luncheon. That was my first award.

“Today, when I tell people that I’m a recluse, they laugh. But it’s true,” said Riley. “I realize now that what I found at Rock Run was solitude. Back then I would rather be at that stream with my dog Jerry more than anything else. Believe it or not, I’m still that way today.”

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2007 HUNTING, FISHING LICENSES ON SALE

DES MOINES – Hunting and fishing licenses for 2007 are on sale now. The cost of a resident hunting license and fishing license is \$17.50 each, unchanged from 2006. The 2006 licenses expire on Jan. 10, 2007.

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